

# *2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Pentecost: All Saints of Ukraine And North America*

Slava Isusu Christu!

Today, we are blessed to celebrate the saints of our Motherland, Ukraine, as well as all Saints of North America.

Thus far, God has revealed the following saints to the Church, in America:

**Saint Herman of Alaska:** Once the Elder was invited aboard a ship. Father Herman gave them one question: "Do you love God?" They all answered, "Certainly, we love God. How can we not love God?" Father Herman protested: "And I a sinner have been trying for more than forty years to love God, I cannot say that I love Him completely." He then began to demonstrate to them the way in which we should love God. "If we love someone," he said, "we always try to please them. Is that the way you gentlemen love God? They had to admit that they had not! "For our own good," concluded the Elder, "let us at least promise ourselves that from this hour, from this very minute we will try to love God more than anything and to fulfill His Holy Will!"

He fell asleep, in the Lord, in 1837.

**Saint Juvenaly,** priest-monk: was a member of the original missionary team that included St. Herman. He was killed by natives trying to stop the spread of Orthodoxy among their people. He did not try to defend himself. After they had killed him, he got up and followed them, urging them to repent. They fell upon him again, this happened several times, finally the natives hacked him to pieces. A column of light arose from his holy relics and reached up to Heaven.

He received a martyr's crown, in 1796.

**Saint Peter the Aleut:** was tortured and killed by Spanish colonists for refusing to convert to Roman Catholicism while being held hostage in San Francisco. Peter witnessed to his Faith in God to his last breath. "I am an Orthodox Christian, and I will not betray my Faith." When this was reported to St. Herman, he turned to his icon, crossed himself and exclaimed, "Holy, new-martyr Peter, pray to God for us!" He was the first native-born American saint.

He received his martyr's crown, in 1815.

**Saint Innocent:** was Alaska's 1<sup>st</sup> Bishop. St. Innocent spread Orthodoxy to the native peoples, ending his life as the chief bishop of the Church in Russia. Like Sts Cyril and Methodius, he created a written language for the natives and translated the Holy Scriptures.

He fell asleep, in the Lord, in 1879.

**Saint Yakov:** was a missionary, spreading Orthodoxy among the Eskimos and Indians as the first native-born American priest.

He fell asleep, in the Lord, in 1864.

**Saint Alexis Toth of Wilkes-Barre,** priest: Born in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, he converted from the Greek Catholic Church, in the United States. His missionary work among the Uniates led thousands to return to Orthodoxy.

He fell asleep, in the Lord, in 1909.

**Saint Raphael of Brooklyn:** Born in Beirut, he was the first bishop consecrated in America, where he was a missionary to Arab immigrants from Lebanon and Syria, defending them from Protestant missionaries.

He fell asleep, in the Lord, in 1915.

**Saint Tikhon:** was America's first archbishop, where he nurtured multiethnic Orthodox unity and English language missionary outreach, and finally as Patriarch, where he died as a victim of communist persecution.

He fell asleep, in the Lord, in 1925.

**Saint John:** was a priest in Chicago and Russia and he was the first clergyman killed by the communist.

He received a martyr's crown, in 1917.

**Saint Alexander:** Born in Volhynia, he was a missionary in New York and the Soviet Union, who died in a prison camp as a victim of communist persecution.

He fell asleep, in the Lord, in 1937.

**Saint Basil:** was a missionary in Alaska, Canada and the United States and head of Poland's first Orthodox military chaplaincy. In 1921, he visited a Ukrainian camp, where he celebrated the Divine Liturgy and preached in Ukrainian for 5,000, boosting their morale. Just days before the surrender of Nazi Germany, Basil met his end on May 4<sup>th</sup>, 1945, which was Great and Holy Friday for that year. Thus

broke into his house and brutally tortured him for four hours. They finally shot Basil and threatened to shoot his daughter too, but they lost their nerve and fled when she knelt before an icon and began to pray her final prayer aloud.

**Saint Nicholas of South Canaan:** a gifted preacher and writer (and is known as the Serbian Chrysostom), a bishop in Serbia, a victim of religious persecution in a Nazi prison camp and head of St. Tikhon's Seminary, in Pennsylvania.

He fell asleep, in the Lord, in 1956.

**Saint John of San Francisco:** Born in the Kharkov Province, he was a bishop in Asia, Europe and North America. He visited the sick and those in prison, and would go to anyone critically ill at any time of day or night to pray at their bedside, and many reported miraculous healings. He appeared at the bedside of one who was dying and had prayed for him to come, though the hospital staff had refused to call for him.

He fell asleep, in the Lord, in 1966.

These saints faced all the challenges we endure. Yet, they kept their focus on Jesus Christ. If you look deeply at their lives and the lives of those righteous ones, not yet glorified, we see one thing: they did nothing extraordinary, and in their simplicity they pleased our Heavenly Father. Father Vasyl, of St. Tikhon's Monastery, was a simply monk. One day a child came to him and asked him if he had ever seen God. Father Vasyl answered, "I see Him every day." The child asked, "What does He look like?" Father Vasyl answered, "Why He looks just like you." Here is an example for us...to see the very face of God in everyone we meet. And in this we shall fulfill the words of St. Seraphim of Sarov, "Acquire the Holy Spirit and thousands will be saved around you."

All Saints of Ukraine and North America, both those known to us and those known only to God, pray to God for us! Amen.

Glory to Jesus Christ!